



# Santa Rosa County, Florida

Local Mitigation Strategy Task Force  
Annual Status Report to Board of County Commissioners  
August 21, 2006

Distribution: Sent to all local newspapers through the County Public Information Office, posted to the Santa Rosa County website, and distributed to Local Mitigation Strategy Task Force member organizations. Copies of this report are available for review the Board of County Commissioners Office, 6495 Caroline St, Milton, FL 32570.

## **I. Background**

The Local Mitigation Strategy Task Force (LMSTF) is composed of representatives from Santa Rosa County, the City of Milton, the City of Gulf Breeze, the town of Jay, the American Red Cross, and the unincorporated communities of Navarre and Holley-By-the-Sea. Unless there are reasons for specially called meetings, the Task Force meets on a quarterly basis with all meetings open to the public. Meeting dates are scheduled at least a week in advance, but usually 3 months in advance, and include notification on the County website and in the County schedule of upcoming meetings read in the Board meetings.

In 2003 the LMSTF began implementing the updates required through the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000. The updated plan was submitted to the State for approval in February 2005. The approved plan was confirmed by each of the three municipalities and the County in April and May 2005. A critical section of the plan is the continuously updated list of priority projects. The primary purpose of the priority list is to identify needed mitigation projects throughout the County. In addition the LMSTF for Santa Rosa County includes preparedness and recovery projects on the priority list. This allows for a more comprehensive countywide approach to planning.

Projects on the list include stormwater improvement, elevations, acquisitions, residential hardening, public facility hardening, utility hardening, shelter hardening, dam and bridge hardening, sewer extensions, education, information gathering improvements and infrastructure improvements.

The end of 2004 and all of 2005 were particularly challenging for the County. In September 2004 Hurricane Ivan battered the area, leaving thousands of homes damaged. Then in the spring of 2005 the County was hit by three consecutive 100 year flood events within the span of about 10 days. Areas that had never experienced flooding found significant water levels in yards, streets and homes. Then in July 2005 Hurricane Dennis directly hit Santa Rosa County. Luckily Dennis was more a wind event than a water event, but homes were still damaged and the County lost a significant

number of decades old oak trees. These events caused a continuous reviewing and adding of needed projects to the priority project list.

## **II. Progress during 2005-2006**

The following activities were completed in 2005:

- The 2005-2010 LMS Plan was submitted and approved by the State of Florida
- In April 2005, a joint application involving the County and the three municipalities was submitted to the Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery Initiative Program that addressed fourteen (14) of the projects on the LMS Priority List.
- In June 2005, all jurisdictions submitted Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) applications for the Hurricane Ivan allocation for Santa Rosa County that addressed twenty-five (25) of the projects on the LMS Priority List.
- Applications were submitted for information technology enhancements and special needs shelters hardening that were not approved for funding.
- The LMS Initiatives Proposal Form, used for submitting projects for the Priority List, was revised (simplified and shortened) and a new form specifically designed for homeowners wanting residential hardening, was developed and implemented in early 2006.
- By-Laws for the LMSTF were revised and approved in January 2006.
- A residential hardening program was developed to further enhance the housing-related projects in the County. This new component focuses on residents in the County who are not low-to-moderate income (addressed with other housing assistance funds) but more middle income but have experienced repetitive losses during the recent hurricane and rain events. Forty-five (45) homeowners were invited to apply as part of the Hurricane Dennis application process with thirty-three (33) completing the FEMA application process.
- The County submitted a major stormwater improvement project for the Ward Basin Rd area for the Hurricane Dennis allocation of HMGP funds. This area experiences flooding from heavy rains and experienced significant damage from the storm surge from Hurricane Ivan.

See Attachment A for a complete list of Priority Projects and status of each.

## **III. Repetitive Loss Properties**

Timeframe	# of properties	Mitigated properties	Awaiting Final Demolition Inspections	Abatement	New Structure Certificates	Remaining
Before Ivan	128	15				113
After Ivan	423	90				333
After Dennis	756	175	15	31	9	526

The number of properties experiencing repetitive losses, primarily from flooding, has increased substantially over the last two years, as have the number of homes remaining to be rebuilt, mitigated, demolished or abated. The County now has funds available for low-to-moderate income residents needing assistance with bringing their home up-to-code and has started a program to assist middle income residents in hardening their primary residence either by elevation, shutters or roof retrofits. The challenge facing the County is the backlog of homes that need addressing and the local capacity of builders that are available. While the situation has improved over the past year, it will be some time before the County has all repetitive loss homes addressed.

#### **IV. Upcoming Action Items**

1. Review the priority list and create categories for use in managing the list  
Responsibility: Special Projects Office, Santa Rosa County & LMSTF  
Timeframe: Before November 2006 meeting
2. Continue to encourage community and organizational representatives to attend and actively participate  
Responsibility: Special Projects Office, Santa Rosa County & LMSTF  
Timeframe: Before February 2007 meeting  
Tasks: 1) Meet with Santa Rosa County Chamber on a business representative; 2) Identify a representative from Bagdad and Pace
3. Encourage homeowners to retrofit homes if they are in a high-risk area  
Responsibility: Special Projects Office, Santa Rosa County & LMSTF  
Timeframe: Before May 2007 meeting  
Tasks: 1) With County PIO staff develop an article on retrofitting homes; 2) Put a consolidated brochure together for the funding streams available to residents for repairing, hardening and elevating their homes; 3) Continue to actively pursue funding sources for residents to harden homes
4. Continue countywide preparedness and recovery planning and integrate into LMS planning  
Responsibility: LMSTF  
Timeframe: Ongoing
5. Work with County Planning and Zoning in integrating the LMS Plan with the Comprehensive Plan in 2007  
Responsibility: Special Projects Office, Santa Rosa County  
Timeframe: Before November 2007 meeting
6. Continue identifying potential funding sources for Priority projects  
Responsibility: Special Projects Office, Santa Rosa County & LMSTF  
Timeframe: Ongoing
7. Review and Update the LMS Plan if necessary  
Responsibility: Special Projects Office, Santa Rosa County & LMSTF  
Timeframe: Before November 2007 meeting

Attachment A